



**Testimony from Paul Dworkin, MD- Pediatrician and Executive Vice President for
Community Child Health at Connecticut Children's Medical Center
to the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee
Regarding SB 29 *An Act Concerning the Earned Income Tax Credit***

March 2, 2022

Senator Fonfara, Representative Scanlon, and members of the legislature's Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our support of Senate Bill 29-
An Act Concerning the Earned Income Tax Credit.

My name is Dr. Paul Dworkin and I serve as the Executive Vice President for Community Child Health at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. I wish to offer my support of this proposal because all children, regardless of the race, area code, or income level of their families deserve equal opportunities to grow, learn, and succeed to their fullest potential.

Before commenting on the bill, we want to provide some background about the Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health (the Office). At Connecticut Children's, we know that only about 10% of children's overall health and wellbeing is determined by the access to and quality of the health care services they receive. The Office works to improve the wide variety of factors that influence a child's health (often referred to as "the social determinants of health") such as housing, transportation, food and nutrition, and family support services—all of which are impacted by a family's economic circumstances.

At Connecticut Children's, more than half of our patients rely on the state's Medicaid program as their source of insurance coverage. As such, we are keenly aware that a family's finances influences their ability to access care and services for their children. All too often, we see families who lack reliable transportation to travel to medical appointments, struggle to afford healthy meals, or cannot afford all of their utility bills. These factors greatly impact the health of children and their families.

The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated many of the existing social and economic challenges facing families. Now more than ever, it is critical that Connecticut legislators prioritize initiatives, like increasing the applicable percentage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), that help keep children healthy, because healthy children grow up to be healthy and productive members of our communities.

The research validates that EITC increases support children's health and wellbeing. Research shows that an increase in the EITC is associated with a reduction in overall child maltreatment. An increase in income from the EITC of \$1,000 reduced child protective services involvement by 7-10% and a 10% increase in state EITC (as is proposed in this legislation) reduced neglect reports by 10%. (Berger et al. 2017).

Berger, L., Font, S.A., Slack, K.S., Waldfogel, J. (2017) Income and child maltreatment in unmarried families: Evidence from the Earned Income Tax Credit. *Rev Econ Household*. 15:1345–1372.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic present an opportunity for state leaders to think bigger and bolder than ever before about what it means to support kids and families. Resilient parents and caregivers are better able to provide kids with a web of support when they can earn a living wage, pay their bills, and put food on the table. We can support children's health by supporting families' resilience.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. If you have any questions about this testimony, please contact Emily Boushee, Connecticut Children's Government Relations Associate at eboushee@connecticutchildrens.org.